

DAVID MILLER

February 2.

K.T. A friend tells me that your photographs of architecture look like sculpture.

D.M. The architecture does or the photographs do?

K.T. The photographs of architecture look like sculpture

~~D.M.~~ K.T. What's the date on this stuff.

D.M. This is, I think 1976 and this is 1975.

K.T. Have you always worked with a view camera

D.M. Not always always. But since 1971. I started and that was the end of the small camera. Everything I think that's in this box is <sup>a contact print.</sup> ~~from a view camera~~ so that tells you what size camera. This is not a view camera. It's from an 1896 box camera.

K.T. Oh really. Hum. What size negative is that.

D.M. 4 x 5. But the rest of these are from a variety of view cameras.

K.T. How come you stopped with the 35mm. You got into a view camera that was it.

D.M. (telephone: Clara "I'll get it") Well I'd actually been working for a few years with a <sup>twin lens reflex</sup>  $2\frac{1}{4}$  camera + you could get <sup>noticeably</sup> nicer quality prints. But since I was into architecture <sup>+ landscape</sup> ~~then~~, once I discovered that bigger makes better and doing what I was doing with it, there was no point. I'm not saying I never use 35. I've shot lots of pictures of my daughter with 35. But for what I

and what other people consider my serious work, I don't think I've used 35 mm for 6 or 7 or 8 years.

K.T. Are these architectural shots taken in Montreal?

D.M. Yes. (pause) (hears Clara on the phone)

And the point is since the object is static there is no reason what so ever to use a small format other than convenience. And I don't consider convenience to be a valid reason. And I'm just astounded at the quality you get in terms of gray scale, in terms of light, that sort of surreal quality you get with large format contact prints.

K.T. Certainly with this type of image. How come you hooked in so tightly to architecture. Like what attracts you?

D.M. I've always like it. I've also liked photographing trees but in generally out of luck photographing trees in Montreal. I don't like to travel. We don't have a car and so that limits me to what is accessible in a rather short range. You know unless I happen to go on a vacation and lug all the equipment with me, which I've done. Um. I don't know. Not too many other people do it so it seems like a useful thing to do to document the grain elevators. Particularly now when <sup>people are tearing them down</sup> ~~they are probably all going to be torn down~~. But that's not why I did it. I didn't know they were all going to be torn down



when I started. I just found them fantastic sculptural shapes, if you will.

I thought when I started and I think more so now that the grain elevator is certainly some of if not the most significant architecture in Montreal.

This generally caused outrage in Montreal arts 19 or 18 c. buildings.

Nonetheless if you want to talk about something <sup>original, interesting</sup> ~~interesting and~~

and not to be found elsewhere in its original form, Montreal's grain elevators would fit the bill.

KT. Have you done any research into them, contacted people like Charney?

DM. A bit. I've been meaning to get together with David Bellman who is very interested in this also. And do some work on them. I have

some Harper Annual reports from the early 19th c. Plus the company that

designed these elevators put out a <sup>very wonderful little</sup> book that I have. which shows you elevators all over the world. Data <sup>about them</sup> inside and out. Sort of a lifetime of

research in a couple of little books, although I'm sure much more

could be done. I mean, I don't want to tell you that I'm entirely

~~spellbound~~ <sup>spellbound</sup> by grain elevators. But for the last few years that's

what I've been interested in photographing. But as you can see you can

go back in this. I didn't start out with them. I started out with

19th c architecture in old Montreal. My guidelines were I tried to avoid the real landmarks.